B.C. HYDRO
WILLISTON TO KELLY LAKE
500 kV TRANSMISSION LINE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

Presented to: B.C.Hydro

Presented by: Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd.

Presented on: May 09, 1990

92-04592/

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Main entry under title:
B.C. Hydro Williston to Kelly Lake 500kV transmission line public consultation report

"Presented on May 9, 1990".
Includes bibliographical references: p.
ISBN 0-7726-1507-1

1. Electric lines - British Columbia - Public opinion. 2. Electric power transmission - British Columbia - Public opinion. 3. Public opinion - British Columbia. I. B.C. Hydro. II. Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants.

TK3144.B21 1992 621.319'13 C92-092098-5

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Introduction

In July 1989, B.C. Hydro retained the services of Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd. (PERC), to develop and implement a public consultation program for a proposed third 500 kV transmission line from Williston Substation, east of Prince George, to Kelly Lake Substation near Clinton. Over the last nine months, PERC has worked closely with members of the Project Team assembled by B.C. Hydro for the study, and with the public to identify ideas and concerns related to the project. PERC is pleased to present the results of the public consultation program.

The report is presented in two sections. The first section provides a detailed discussion of the methodology, the public issues and concerns and an analysis of the effectiveness of the consultation program. The second section of the report contains the Appendices which provide details on specific aspects of the program including public information newsletters, newspaper ads, and minutes of meetings.

MANDATE

At the outset of the public consultation program, PERC established a goal and objectives to provide a framework for each step of the program. The goal as outlined in the Proposal of Services (Appendix A) is to:

> *"enhance the project through a comprehensive public consultation program which recognizes the potential benefits and constraints imposed by such projects on society and which develops strategies to improve the overall effectiveness of the energy project."*

This led to a series of objectives which included:

1) providing as much information as is reasonably possible to the general public and interested individuals affected by the project, and to keep the public fully aware of the planning and decision making process;
2) identifying specific issues through direct liaison with the general public and interest groups;

3) developing and nurturing a strong working relationship and trust with the communities, interest groups and affected individuals;
4) identifying, within the context of the consultation program, potential negative impacts of the project and to explore strategies for minimizing them;
5) identifying the potential benefits inherent in the project and explore strategies for maximizing them;
6) documenting the public consultation process for future reference, evaluation, monitoring and the license application.

During the consultation program, these objectives were refined to be more easily presented to the public as follows:

1) to provide as much information as is reasonably possible about the project to interested parties;
2) to incorporate ideas and concerns from interested parties into the planning process;
3) to report back to the general public about the input received and how that input has been used in the planning process.

PERC was responsible for maintaining the focus of the consultation program to meet these objectives. However, in practice, it is the Consultant's belief that all members of the project team demonstrated a sincere commitment to ensuring an open and proactive consultation process.

ASSUMPTIONS

To guide the public consultation program, a number of assumptions were made at the outset of the process. These are outlined below:

1. Project information and notices were to be developed in the English language. This assumption appeared to be correct since no complaints were received and no inquiries were made in other languages;
2. The project description would not change significantly to cause the project team to reprint public information and to revisit all publics once the program was underway;

3. Route alternatives were not considered in that the right-of-way had been acquired for the third 500 kV line in the 1960's. Although route options were discussed, the concept of acquiring a complete new right-of-way was not an option;
4. The rationale for the transmission line was based on the need for electrical energy in B.C. Although questions about exporting electrical energy were anticipated and raised by the public, at no time was the project presented or justified on the basis of power export;
5. The 1989 Twenty Year Resource Plan provided a framework for the project. A copy of the Introduction To The Twenty Year Resource Plan was included in each of the information kits made available to the public. (Appendix B-5.)

These assumptions provided necessary guidelines for the public consultation program.

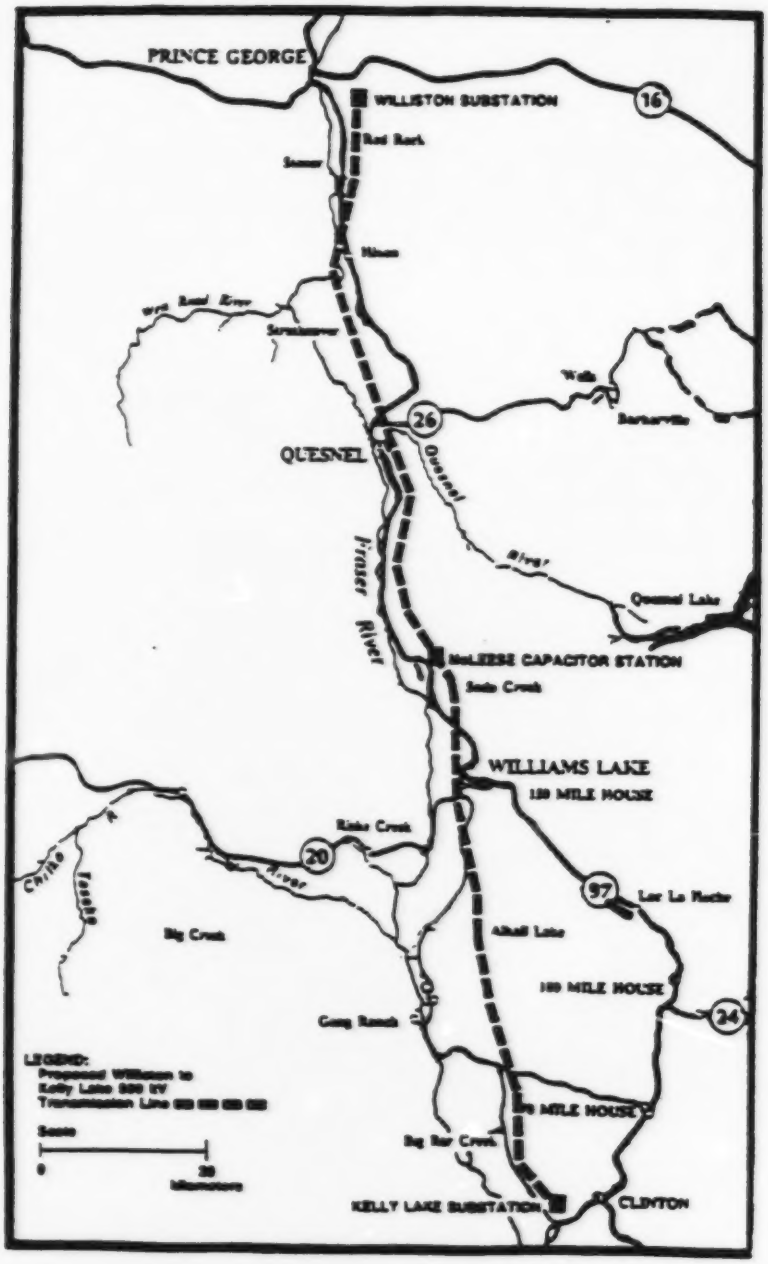
STUDY AREA

The study area for the consultation program focused primarily on those communities, groups and individuals near the transmission line corridor, including the communities of Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake and Clinton. This became the primary area for distribution of project information, interest group meetings and public meetings. Although the vast majority of interest came from residents along the existing transmission line corridor, the program remained flexible and there was no attempt to limit the study area, the public's involvement in the program or the project inquiries.

The study area for the Williston to Kelly Lake transmission line did overlap with the project area for the Kelly Lake - Cheekye transmission line near the Village of Clinton and Kelly Lake substation. A public meeting for the Kelly Lake - Cheekye project took place on October 03, 1989, in Clinton and the meeting for the Williston - Kelly Lake project took place on October 06, 1989. The meetings were kept separate because of the uniqueness of each project and the potential issues and concerns. However, each project team was aware of the status of both projects, and information on each project was made available in the Village of Clinton municipal office.

A map showing communities along the route corridor is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Study Area



Methodology

For the purpose of this report, the public consultation program can be divided into three stages, namely:

1. **Project Information and Background Materials**
   - this continued throughout the consultation process, and the public still has access to information materials through Hydro's toll free number, local B.C. Hydro offices and libraries in the project area.

2. **Public Consultation**
   - including discussions with local and regional governments, environmental groups, special interest groups and the general public.

3. **Documentation and Monitoring**
   - including documentation of public ideas and concerns, establishing a follow up monitoring program and preparing the public consultation report.

Each of these stages contains a series of steps which, together, comprise the consultation program. The implementation schedule is shown in the chart in Figure 2, and each stage of the process is presented in the following discussion.

Stage I - Project Information and Background Materials

The preparation and distribution of information materials was designed to inform the public, and to respond to requests for information. Stage I included the following steps:

1) Review of Background Information

At the outset of the project the Consultant reviewed all background information which had been assembled, including the Guidelines for the Energy Project Review Process, the draft of the Energy Project Certificate application, Project Rationale Report, Project

Figure 2
Public Consultation Program Implementation Schedule

*STEP * only key steps noted	JULY 2 3 4	AUGUST 1 2 3 4	SEPT 1 2 3 4	OCT 1 2 3 4	NOV 1 2 3 4	DEC 1 2 3 4	JAN 1 2 3 4	FEB 1 2 3 4	MAR 1 2 3 4
Stage I									
o Review background info		———							
o Government meetings		——							
o Notify MLA's, MP's, Native Bands			——	——	——	——			
o Mail List and Information Line		———	———	———	———	———	on going ———		
o Public Announcement		———							
o Community Profiles		———	———						
o Project Newsletter			———						
o Project Prospectus			——						
o Project Information Kits				———					
o Project Response Newsletter					——				
Stage II									
o Interest Group Interviews			——						
o Public Meetings (first set)				—					
o Analysis of Public Input				———					
o Public Meetings (second set)				—					
o Cariboo Tribal Council Meeting				—	—	—			
Stage III									
o Interim Report						—			
o Final Report							———		
o Monitoring						———	(ongoing) ——		
o Responses to Requests for Information			———	(ongoing) ———					

Prospectus, Environmental Review of Williston - Kelly Lake 500 kV No. 3 Transmission Line (1981), B.C. Hydro's Twenty Year Resource Plan, map mosaics, air photos, geographic information on the study area, press clippings, and general information pertaining to Hydro's long range plans and policies. Reference documents are listed in Appendix E.

The Consultant and members of the project team toured the project area by helicopter on August 01, 1989 and by vehicle during the week of July 31 to August 03, 1989, between meetings with municipal and regional government officials. The helicopter flight lasted for approximately two hours and included an overview of the transmission line corridor from Williston Substation to Kelly Lake Substation. It allowed the Consultant to become familiar with the route and potential areas of concern, thereby providing:

- an aerial perspective of the transmission line corridor, its width and the terrain, and general clearing that may be required;
- preliminary identification of buildings and settlement areas adjacent to the east side of the right-of-way; approximately thirty-five buildings and an undetermined number of cottages were identified as within about 100 metres the eastern edge of the right-of-way;
- an identification of areas where placement of the line could present potential problems, for example near Johnston Road south of Quesnel, viewscapes on Dragon Lake and Crystaline Lake, the golf course south of Williams Lake, and residences in the Quesnel area.

2) Meetings with Local and Regional Governments

Prior to presenting the project in the public forum the Consultant, the Project Manager and Community Relations Coordinator met with local and regional governments in communities and Districts affected by the project. The purpose of these meetings was to:

- inform local and regional governments about the project and the consultation process;
- obtain feedback on potential questions and concerns, on groups and individuals that should be contacted, and on the consultation process.

Meetings occurred between July 31, 1989 and August 03, 1989 and included:

Regional District of Fraser Fort George - July 31, 1989
City of Prince George - July 31, 1989
City of Quesnel - July 31, 1989
City of Williams Lake - August 01, 1989
Cariboo Regional District - August 01, 1989
Village of Clinton - August 01, 1989
Thompson Nicola Regional District - August 03, 1989

At these meetings, the project team described the project, its rationale, the project schedule, and activities related to the public consultation program. A 'Project Overview' handout (Appendix B-1) was provided to those attending the meeting. Local and regional government representatives, including elected officials and senior staff, were then asked to provide comments on the project and the proposed public consultation process. This helped to identify some of the issues that could potentially arise during the public consultation program. Examples included electric and magnetic field effects, storage of PCB's, electricity export and impacts on environmental resources. Government officials also provided names of individuals and groups that should be contacted because of their possible interest in the project. Notes of the meetings with local and regional governments are presented in Appendix C-1.

B.C. Hydro staff in Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake, 100 Mile House, Cache Creek, Lillooet and Kamloops were also briefed on the project during the week of July 31 to August 03, 1989. This served to familiarize staff with the project to help them respond to public inquiries. Secondly, it was felt that Hydro employees would be able to identify local issues and concerns because they work and live in communities near the project area. Potential concerns identified at these sessions included electric and magnetic field effects, public access and use of the right-of-way and potential visual impacts due to clearing.

The general response to all of these meetings was an appreciation for the opportunity to learn about the project before it was formally announced. There was also a positive recognition by many of those contacted that B.C. Hydro was cultivating a new approach to public participation in planning for the electrical energy needs in British Columbia.

3) Notification to MLA's, MP's and Native Bands

Prior to the public announcement and the public meetings, B.C. Hydro notified politicians representing those communities near the line, and native bands and Tribal Councils in the project area. This occurred on August 25, 1989, in a letter from the Vice President of Hydro's Corporate and Environmental Affairs. The letter outlined Hydro's intention to apply for an Energy Project Certificate, the plans for public consultation and an invitation to meet with those interested in discussing the project. A copy of the letter is presented in Appendix D-4.

This notification resulted in meetings with the Alkali Band and the Cariboo Tribal Council, the notes of which are presented in Appendix C-4. Native groups were also notified about the first set of public meetings through correspondence on September 22, 1989.

All of the MLA's, MP's and Native groups were added to the mail list and received copies of the schedule for the second set of meetings and the Response Newsletter during the week of October 13th and October 20th, 1989, respectively.

4) Mail List and Information Line

In order to ensure that interested parties were kept well informed and to provide a central information source, a mail list and a telephone hotline were set up. The mail list initially included government officials, interest groups and native groups. However, the list was continually updated as people signed in at meetings, filled out mail list forms distributed as part of the newsletter or called requesting information. The mail list eventually contained a total of 370 names.

The toll free telephone hotline was set up such that anyone who had a specific concern or required information could contact B.C. Hydro directly. The hotline was manned during business hours and an answering machine was on during unmanned

times. A total of 73 public information inquiries were logged and, as of March 28, 1989, 62 of these inquiries had received responses; outstanding inquiries are currently being addressed.

A summary log of the public information inquiries is presented in Appendix D-3.

5) Public Announcement

The proposed project was formally announced on August 29, 1989, by means of a press release distributed to the media in the study area (Appendix B-7). The press release had been preempted by an article in the Prince George Citizen on July 12, 1989, which created some initial awareness of the project. A copy of the press article is included in Appendix B-9.

6) Community Profile

To provide background to the Project Team, PERC prepared a summary profile of the study area, including the communities of Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake and Clinton. Basic information on the geographic setting of each community, present and future populations, and social and economic characteristics was documented and combined with the results of the interest group meetings to provide each Project Team member with a profile of the study area prior to the public meetings. This information was, however, not designed to duplicate the role of socio-economic and land use consultants. The study area profile is presented in Appendix B-4.

7) Project Newsletter

To provide all people living near the transmission line corridor with an opportunity to be informed and to participate in the public consultation process, PERC developed a 'Project Newsletter' in consultation with Hydro staff. The newsletter was approved by senior management in B.C. Hydro, and 40,000 copies printed for distribution on September 25, 1989.

The newsletter was sent to 38,577 households in communities and rural postal walks adjacent to the corridor. A copy of the newsletter and the post office delivery distribution forms is presented in Appendix B-2. Delivery included all residences that receive mail on postal walks, mailboxes or general delivery by Canada Post in communities including Prince George, Hixon, Dog Creek, Quesnel, McCleese,

Telegraph Creek, Williams Lake, Alkali Lake and Clinton. Confirmation checks with postmasters along the route verified that by October 01, 1989, there was a high probability that every residential address included in the mailout received a copy of the newsletter. No newsletters were returned by the post office as undeliverable.

Newsletters were also placed in B.C. Hydro offices, local libraries and in information kits distributed throughout the public consultation program.

8) Project Prospectus (Appendix B-3)

Because the proposed third transmission line is a regulated project, a Project Prospectus was prepared to supplement the Application to the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. The Prospectus was prepared by B.C. Hydro staff and was printed and available for distribution in August, 1989. It provided a rationale and description of the project, an overview of the planning and environmental studies and the public consultation process.

The Prospectus was designed to compliment the newsletter, and provided more detailed information on particular aspects of the project. B.C. Hydro printed 1500 copies of the Prospectus for distribution at meetings with the public, to respond to information requests, and to leave at Hydro offices and libraries in the study area.

9) Energy Project Certificate (EPC) Application

During the initial stages of the project and as part of the EPC Application, the Consultant participated in project team meetings to provide support information to the Application. Specifically, the Consultant's role was to describe the methodology for the public consultation program. This was incorporated into the application which was submitted to the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources on September 21, 1989.

10) Project Information on Health Effects of Transmission Lines

In recognizing the potential concern about health effects of transmission lines, background information was prepared for presentation at public meetings, and for placement in libraries in the study area. This included an information sheet on electric and magnetic field effects and more comprehensive information packages.

The information paper on electric and magnetic field effects was included in the information kits provided at the public meetings, and was particularly helpful in addressing initial questions and concerns. However, it was recognized during the first set of public meetings that more detailed information would be required, and the following initiatives were taken:

1) Detailed information packages on electric and magnetic field effects were sent to those people who had requested it at the public meetings. Correspondence and mailout of information packages was coordinated through B.C. Hydro's Manager for EMF.

2) Summary research documents and a comprehensive bibliography were placed in libraries in communities near the transmission line corridor including: (Appendix D-2)

   - Prince George Public Library;
   - College of New Caledonia Library;
   - Cariboo-Thompson Nicola Library System, Clinton, Quesnel and Williams Lake Branches.

   Information provided to libraries included publications by the Ontario Department of Health, Bonneyville Power Administration, New York State Health Commission, B.C. Utilities Commission Inquiry Report, B.C. Hydro's submission to the B.C. Utilities Commission, and a comprehensive list of reference material.

3) As part of the second set of public meetings, B.C. Hydro's Manager for EMF made a detailed presentation on electric and magnetic field effects. The presentation outlined the results of past and present research and responded to questions from the public.

In the Consultant's opinion, providing the different levels of information allowed the public the opportunity to study the issue to the degree they desired.

11) Project Information Kits and Meeting Attendance

To present the project to the public, an information kit (photograph, Appendix B-5) was prepared by PERC in consultation with B.C. Hydro. This included:

- the Project Newsletter;
- the "Introduction to the Twenty Year Resource Plan;
- Project Prospectus;
- EMF information paper;
- information on the objectives of the public consultation program;
- the Response Newsletter (added to the kit for the second set of meetings).

This information was placed in a cardstock folder and given to all those attending the public meetings. The information was also provided to interest groups and left at libraries and Hydro offices throughout the study area.

The Consultant is of the opinion that the information kits were a valuable resource in helping people understand the project and its rationale, and to allow them to effectively participate in the consultation process.

To ensure that the public's questions and concerns could be addressed, B.C. Hydro resource staff were made available to respond to specific questions at the public meetings. This included production staff, and staff knowledgeable in Hydro's systems planning, and electric and magnetic field effects. If a question could not be answered, a commitment was made to research the concern and to get back to the interested party.

12) Project Response Newsletter

The analysis of public input led to a variety of strategies to address particular concerns and, where possible, to improve the proposed project. These strategies were consolidated into a second project Response Newsletter which included the following discussion topics:

- o Compensation for the Right-of-Way;
- o Health Effects;
- o Right-of-Way Clearing and Maintenance;

- o Environmental Studies;
- o Vegetation Management;
- o Local Economic Benefits.

The Response Newsletter was designed to address specific concerns, and a copy was sent to approximately 370 persons on the mail list prior to the second set of public meetings. The Newslettter also formed the basis for discussion at the second set of public meetings held during the week of November 27 to 30, 1989. A copy of the Response Newsletter is presented in Appendix B-8.

Stage II - Public Consultation

This stage of the process provided a forum for direct participation to identify the public's ideas and concerns about the proposed transmission line. Public information materials developed in Stage I were used to support this second stage of the program outlined below.

13) Interest Group Interviews

As a first step in identifying public concerns, the Consultant met with approximately 30 interest groups and individuals in communities in the study area. These groups were identified based on suggestions from local and regional governments, past contact by the Community Relations Coordinator, and by referrals from groups interviewed. Twenty-three interviews took place during the first two weeks of September 1989, representing over 30 different groups.

The interviews were scheduled at a central location in the communities of Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake and Clinton. Meetings were arranged by the Consultant, except in the Village of Clinton where the Village Clerk contacted the interest groups on behalf of the Consultant. The results of the interest group meetings are summarized in Appendix C-2.

Only the public consultation consultant attended the meetings with each group, which lasted for 1 to 1.5 hours each and were attended by up to five representatives. The general format for the interviews is outlined below:

- brief overview and description of the project, and the planning and public consultation studies;
- a discussion of the group's history, representation and interests;
- questions about how the project could affect or interest the group and its members;
- identification and discussion of specific concerns;
- questions and discussion of potential benefits which the group may feel could occur as a result of the project proceeding (e.g. employment, economic spinoffs);
- identification of any special information requirements or concerns needing to be addressed.

Comments and suggestions from the interest group interviews were reviewed by the Project Team in anticipation of the first set of public meetings. Some groups requested additional information on topics such as Hydro's vegetation management program, electric and magnetic field effects and the Twenty Year Resource Plan. This information was made available through written responses, and addressed during the presentations at the first set of public meetings.

14) Public Meetings - First Set (See Appendix C-3 - Meeting Notes)
The first set of public meetings were held during the week of October 03 to October 06, 1989. These meetings were designed to:

- present the project and to clarify any specific aspects related to the technical planning and development of the proposed transmission line; and,
- identify particular ideas, concerns, and benefits and costs of the proposed project that should be considered by the Project Team.

Issues such as health risks, land use, public access to the corridor and the need for the line were anticipated.

The following meetings were held:

- October 03 - Prince George Legion - 12 attendees
- October 04 - Quesnel Elks Hall - 31 attendees
- October 05 - Williams Lake Overlander Convention Centre
  - 19 attendees
- October 06 - Clinton Community Hall -10 attendees

  Total - 72 attendees

Meetings were advertised in the local media one week to 10 days in advance. Copies of the newspaper and radio ads are presented in Appendix B-7.

A letter was also sent to each of the 191 property owners on B.C. Hydro's line list on September 22, 1989, (Appendix D-5) to ensure that they were aware of the project and notified about the meetings. This letter outlined Hydro's intent to apply for an Energy Project Certificate to construct the third 500 kV line, and identified the public consultation program activities, with a meeting schedule, locations, dates and time.
The meeting format included a half hour preview of information handouts and displays, followed by presentations and a discussion period. The display included a series of panels outlining the need for the transmission line, how it fits within the context of Hydro's Twenty Year Resource Plan, and a series of photo mosaics and maps showing the relative location of the proposed line. A separate set of photo mosaics was used in each community to allow the public to identify with community landmarks and, in some cases, their own residence, relative to the transmission line corridor.

The presentations included a ten minute project overview by the Project Manager, a fifteen minute discussion of Hydro's Twenty Year Resource Plan and future energy needs, a ten minute outline of the environmental studies proposed for the project and a five minute overview of the public consultation program. The discussion on the Resource Plan placed the proposed project within the broader provincial electrical energy context, and addressed issues such as projected electrical energy demand and the relationship of the transmission line to Site C, and the Alcan Kemano Completion Project.

The presentation format for the first set of meetings is included in Appendix C-3. The Project Team presentations did not focus on potential project impacts, whether positive or negative, but left this to the discussion period which followed.

Once the presentations were finished, the Consultant facilitated a question and answer session, and concerns were noted on a flipchart for future reference. Throughout the discussion, a strong emphasis was placed on having the public identify their concerns and ideas about the project and ways of improving it, should it proceed. If a concern could not be addressed at the meeting, a commitment was made to research the question and respond directly to that individual either in writing or at the second set of public meetings.

A questionnaire and comment sheet (Appendix B-6) were also handed out at the meetings to solicit written comments and suggestions. The response to the comment sheets was relatively low compared to the discussion portion of the meeting. The Consultant noted that all written comments and suggestions were reviewed by the project team, and inquiries addressed as part of B.C. Hydro's 'public information request' response program.

15) Analysis of Public Input

Following the first set of meetings all of the public input, including the results of the interest group interviews and the information requests, were reviewed by the Project Team on October 20, 1989. Project Team members were assigned to research specific issues and concerns related to their area of expertise, with the objective of determining how these concerns could be addressed to improve the project and to meet the public's needs. In some cases, members of the project team were required to send out additional information or to contact concerned individuals directly.

Following a two week period of analysis, the Project Team reconvened to discuss the most appropriate way of addressing each concern. This occurred on November 02, 1989, and the results of this workshop session were summarized in a Response Newsletter prepared by PERC in consultation with B.C. Hydro. Following approval of the response document by B.C. Hydro, 1500 copies were printed for distribution.

A second set of public meetings was then scheduled for November 27 to 30, 1989, to present the response newsletter. In the week prior to these meetings each person on the mail list received a copy of the meeting schedule and a copy of the response newsletter in separate mail outs. This, combined with advertising two weeks prior to the meetings, provided public notice well in advance of the meeting dates.

In addition, B.C. Hydro's Community Relations Coordinator in Prince George contacted local and regional government offices on November 20, 1989. This included the Cities of Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake, the Village of Clinton and the Regional Districts of Fraser Fort George and Cariboo. Seven individuals who had inquired about the second set of public meetings were also contacted directly by phone to ensure that they had been notified.

16) Public Meetings - Second Set (See Appendix C-5 - Meeting Notes)
The purpose of the second round of public meetings was to report back to the public on how their input had been used in planning for the transmission line. It provided the project team with an opportunity to respond to specific concerns and to show how the project had been improved through public consultation. Four meetings were scheduled as follows:

- November 27 - Prince George Legion - 8 attendees
- November 28 - Quesnel Legion - 43 attendees
- November 29 - Williams Lake Convention Centre - 15 attendees
- November 30 - Clinton Legion - 5 attendees

Total - 71 attendees

The format for the meeting is presented in Appendix C-5. The focus was on presenting B.C. Hydro's response to the issues and concerns identified as a result of all public input into the project. After a brief introduction by the Community Relations Coordinator, the Consultant gave a five minute overview of the status of the public consultation process. This was followed by three presentations, each focussing on a particular aspect of the project. The first presentation, by the Project Manager, described the project and addressed public concerns related to construction, right-of-way maintenance and clearing, compensation for the right-of-way and economic

benefits. This was followed by a presentation by the Environmental Studies Consultant who outlined the results of the environmental and land use studies. The last presentation focused on health effects from transmission lines, in particular electric and magnetic field effects. This was presented by Hydro's Project Manager for EMF.

A question and discussion session followed the presentations, and members of the project team stayed until all questions and concerns had been addressed. Where the project team could not address a particular concern, this was noted and a follow up response prepared.

The number of attendees was less at the second set of meetings, except in Quesnel where 43 people attended. In the Consultant's opinion, advertising for the meetings was not likely a factor contributing to the low turnout since the use of radio and newspaper advertising was extensive, (Appendix B-7) and each person on the mail list had been notified directly. The low turnout, particularly in Prince George, may have been due to a lack of interest or concern about the project since the line is located east of the City and outside of the municipal boundaries.

17) Meetings with Native Groups

Alkali Band

The transmission line easement crosses two Indian reserves belonging to the Alkali Band. The Band was initially notified at the outset of the project (Appendix D-4) and B.C. Hydro officials met with Band representatives on October 05, 1989 to present the project. The Band requested, through the Community Relations Coordinator, that the project team make a presentation to the Cariboo Tribal Council and a meeting with the Council took place on October 18, 1989. B.C. Hydro also met with the Alkali Band on December 20, 1989, to review the right-of-way agreement. Notes of these meetings are presented in Appendix C-4.

Cariboo Tribal Council

In recognizing the importance of providing opportunities for Bands and Tribal Councils to understand the project and to express their concerns, a preliminary discussion was held with representatives of the Cariboo Tribal Council on October 05, 1989. Representatives requested that a more formal presentation be made to the Tribal Council, and this was held on October 18, 1989. The meeting was attended by members of the Project Team and seven members of the Tribal Council representing

the Alkali Lake Band, Soda Creek Band, Alexandria Band and Tsilhqotin Band. The project team made a presentation after which the Consultant facilitated the discussion session. The Consultant noted that the participation and response at the meeting was very low, and relatively few concerns were identified. More effective issue identification has since taken place through phone conversations and written inquiries and responses with the Tribal Council. The Consultant has noted that discussions with the Tribal Council and Alkali Band are still taking place to resolve any outstanding questions and concerns. Notes of the meetings with the Alkali Band and the Cariboo Tribal Council are presented in Appendix C-4, and recent correspondence with the Tribal Council is presented in Appendix D-4.

Stage III - Documentation and Monitoring

18) Interim Report

Shortly after the final set of public meetings, the Public Consultation Consultant was requested by B.C. Hydro to prepare an interim report on the results of the consultation process to date. This report focused primarily on the public's comments and concerns expressed throughout the public consultation program. The report was presented to B.C. Hydro on December 15, 1989.

19) Final Report

Based on the methodology and the results of the consultation process, PERC has prepared this report. A draft of the report has been reviewed by B.C. Hydro to ensure accuracy with respect to dates, policies and implementation responsibilities. Although B.C. Hydro provided comments on a draft of the report, PERC retains complete responsibility and ownership for the contents of the final report.

20) Monitoring Program

The Consultant's mandate for the public consultation program will be complete following a comprehensive documentation of the results of the process. However, the need for ongoing dialogue with the public has been recognized and discussed in the second set of public meetings, and in discussions with B.C. Hydro. The Consultant is of the opinion that the monitoring phase should address the following issues:

a) Ongoing Communication

Although the formal public consultation program is near completion, clearing and construction will not begin before 1991 and the line will not be in service before 1994. During this interim period, it is possible for people to forget about the project, the discussion of issues and concerns, and the commitments made by B.C. Hydro to address particular concerns as a means to improve the project. New people moving into the area could also be unaware of the project and the scope and nature of the environmental, technical and public consultation studies which have been completed. This raises the need for ongoing communication with people in the study area.

The following activities are suggestions as to how ongoing communication can be achieved:

- periodic press releases on the status of the project, supplemented by interviews with the Community Relations Coordinator and the Project Manager;
- maintaining the toll free telephone hotline to respond to public inquiries;
- continued publication of the newsletter series to keep people informed about the project status; two newsletters have been published to date. This should occur at least twice a year and should be directed at all individuals on the project mail list. Newsletters should also be available in B.C. Hydro offices in the project area, in libraries and in local and regional government offices where there is a high degree of interaction with the public;
- having the Properties Division representative contact property owners following approval of the project to address site specific land owner concerns related to project implementation and land use in the right-of-way;
- placing ads in local newspapers when the project goes to tender;
- making project information available at the upcoming Energy Forum to take place in Prince George in May, 1990.

This ongoing communications program should be designed to provide information on the following:

- status of the project relative to regulatory approvals and issuance of the Energy Project Certificate;
- reaffirming the need and rationale for the project;
- project description;

- project timing and implementation schedules;
- the public's interest in local economic benefits, in particular clearing and construction contracts.

b) Information Requirements

The public will continue to require access to information and responses to specific concerns regardless of the status of the public consultation process and the project. Resources must be maintained to ensure that inquiries receive prompt attention and that the public has access to information. Specific areas where this is required include:

- continued discussions with the Cariboo Tribal Council to address questions about the rationale for the third 500 kV line;
- completing outstanding public information requests; At the time of writing, of the 73 public information requests, 11 responses are still being completed;
- continued liaison with the Nechako Environmental Coalition on electric and magnetic field effects.

c) Research on Issues

Although the public consultation program addressed the public's concerns in a proactive and open manner, the public identified two areas where they felt B.C. Hydro should undertake further research, including:

Research on Health Effects of Transmission Lines

The public is very interested in the health effects of living and working near transmission lines. However, it was evident during the early stages of the public consultation program that very little information was available in local libraries on this topic. The Consultant noted that B.C. Hydro subsequently took steps to place information in local libraries, and to send EMF information packages to interested persons. Based on comments during the public consultation process, the public is supportive of B.C. Hydro becoming directly involved in research on electric and magnetic field effects.

Compensation for the Right-of-Way

Property owners were concerned that B.C. Hydro did not provide fair compensation for the right-of-way when it was first acquired in the 1960's. There was also a concern

by a few property owners that transmission lines substantially reduce the value of their property. The Consultant noted that the Properties representative was in attendance at every public meeting and addressed questions about Hydro's land compensation policies. Information on the effect of transmission lines on property values would be valuable for future B.C. Hydro public consultation programs.

d) Monitoring the Success of the Public Consultation Program

The goal of the public consultation program is to improve the project through effective public consultation. In the Consultant's opinion, this has been accomplished within the scope of this program. However, the true measure of the program's success will come when the project is implemented, and commitments made during the consultation program are met.

To achieve this, it will be necessary for B.C. Hydro to monitor the implementation over the next four years. Key result areas should include, but not be limited to:

1) Ongoing Communication and Research
   - Develop a communications plan which covers the project time frame, including newsletters, press releases and interviews.
   - Possible research on EMF and the impact of the transmission lines on property values.

2) Health Effects from Transmission Lines
   - Ensure proactive placement of new information in libraries.
   - Ensure follow-up on all information requests concerning EMF and induction problems.

3) Economic Issues
   - Ensure that local and regional governments are kept informed about economic opportunities from project implementation.

4) Environmental Studies
   - During the public consultation process a number of individuals requested copies of the environmental reports. External Relations should monitor the dissemination of this information to ensure they are placed in libraries in the study area.

Public Comments and Concerns

During the public consultation program, a variety of comments and concerns were identified. A synopsis of the issues and how each has been addressed is outlined in the following discussion. It is important to note that many comments pertained to the clarification of technical aspects of the project; for example, questions on tower height, placing the line underground and width of the right-of-way. These were thoroughly discussed at the meetings and have not been noted as major concerns, but as clarifications of the project description.

1) Project Justification

Questions on the need for the third 500 kV transmission line arose at each of the public meetings and in discussions with interest groups, native groups and local and regional governments. This concern was anticipated since it is an obvious consideration in presenting the project. The Consultant noted that the rationale for the project was presented in project information, by the project manager in his presentation and description of the project and by Hydro staff responsible for transmission system planning. The project rationale was a particular concern to the Cariboo Tribal Council and to residents in the Quesnel and Williams Lake areas, who asked the following types of questions:

- What are the alternatives to building the line?
- Is the line late in coming?
- What is the risk factor associated with having only two lines supplying electrical power to the lower mainland, and how often have outages occurred in the past?
- What is the connection of this proposed line to Site C ?
- Will the line be used to export energy from B.C. ?

The Consultant noted that these types of questions were addressed in a number of ways including:

1) Presenting the project rationale in display panel information at each public meeting;

2) Providing copies of Hydro's Twenty Year Resource Plan to interest groups and people attending meetings or requesting information kits;
3) Providing a 15 minute presentation on the Twenty Year Resource Plan at the first set of public meetings and having Hydro's System Planning staff available to address questions;
4) Providing a direct response to questions raised at the public meetings, or committing to obtain the necessary information in situations where answers were not readily available.

The discussion on project justification typically occurred at the beginning of the public meetings, and did not take up a substantial amount of time. Members of the project team discussed the need for the line for system reliability and to transmit additional electrical energy from Alcan's Kemano Completion Project, and potentially from the Site C project should it proceed. Most people attending the meetings appeared to accept the rationale for the proposed transmission line, possibly because the project has been planned since the right-of-way was acquired in the 1960's. However, in the case of the Cariboo Tribal Council and one specific individual in Quesnel a more detailed written response was provided on the Twenty Year Resource Plan and the frequency of electrical line outages on the existing two 500 kV lines. The Consultant has noted that discussions with the Tribal Council are ongoing.

2) **Right-of-Way Maintenance, Clearing and Cleanup**

a) Right-of-Way Maintenance

As the public consultation process progressed, it became apparent that the maintenance and management of the transmission line corridor was an important issue, regardless of the third line. Concerns were expressed about public trespass and use of the corridor, leaving access gates open and allowing cattle to escape, weed control, and past construction practices which left debris thereby making land use difficult. Suggestions by the public as to how to address these concerns included providing cattle guards where access is a problem, improved signage along the right-of-way, cleaning up debris from past construction at the time of new construction and more direct contact with property owners about right-of-way maintenance. These suggestions were reviewed by the project team on October 20, 1989, at which time specific concerns and suggestions were assigned to project team members for analysis and recommendations.

B.C. Hydro's response to these concerns is outlined in the Response Newsletter (Appendix B-8). The Consultant has noted that a strong emphasis has been placed on working closely with the landowner to address specific concerns. For example, where open gates could allow cattle to escape from grazing lands in the corridor, B.C. Hydro has agreed to work with the landowner to place signs identifying private property and to install cattle guards where necessary. The Consultant has also noted that Hydro will undertake to clean-up debris left on the right-of-way during past construction. This will be done in consultation with the landowner when the third line is constructed.

b) Right-of-Way Clearing

This concern focused on the extent of clearing for the proposed third line and the resulting visual impact. Clearing concerns were more prevalent in the Quesnel and Williams Lake areas where there are more residents living adjacent to the line and the visual vegetation buffer may be affected.

During the public meetings, properties potentially affected by clearing were identified on the airphotos and maps for future reference. The Properties Division representative recorded the names of concerned individuals and the Consultant noted that a commitment was made to contact individual property owners once the project is approved.

It was suggested by the public and agreed that B.C. Hydro should meet with property owners prior to clearing to review the extent of the clearing boundary where it is a concern to the landowner. The Consultant noted that B.C. Hydro's Properties Division representative has contacted a number of property owners adjacent to the right-of-way at their request to discuss specific concerns related to land use and the potential visual impact.

During the second set of public meetings, it was noted that there was public support for Hydro's initiatives to work with residents adjacent to the corridor to mitigate potential visual impacts as a result of clearing for the third line.

c) Right-of-Way Clean-up

When the existing transmission lines were built in the 1960's, the public noted that refuse and debris, including pieces of cable, tools, concrete blocks, pieces of

equipment, rock piles and tree stumps were left in the corridor. This has made it difficult to use the land for agricultural purposes. The public wanted to know if B.C. Hydro would be prepared to remove debris left from past construction.

The Consultant noted that Hydro's response was that clearing standards and the inspection process during construction have been improved since the first two lines were built. B.C. Hydro officials stated that during the construction process for the third line, Hydro would be prepared to work with property owners to clean up debris left in the right-of-way where it will improve the use and management of the land.

3) Environmental Management

During the public consultation process, questions were asked about B.C. Hydro's environmental studies for the proposed line, and about trapline compensation, weed control, application of herbicides, and monitoring of wildlife crossing the corridor.

The Consultant noted that each of these issues was addressed directly in the first set of meetings by Hydro's Environmental Studies Consultant who provided an overview of the environmental program and responded to questions. The results of the environmental studies were presented at the second set of public meetings, and the Environmental Studies Consultant provided an overview of important and sensitive biophysical and cultural resources in and adjacent to the corridor. Proposed mitigative measures to protect these resources were also identified.

The environmental program was generally well received. However, in a few cases, there was interest in reviewing the detailed environmental reports prior to the second set of public meetings. Although the detailed reports were not available at the time of the second meetings, the Consultant noted that the Environmental Studies Consultant has sent the Terms of Reference for the biophysical, heritage and land use studies to interested persons, and copies of the summary of the environmental reports will be made available in libraries in Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake, and in the Village of Clinton.

The concern about loss of traplines was addressed by outlining B.C. Hydro's trapline compensation program. The Consultant noted that there is strong public support for the trapline compensation program from representatives of the B.C. Trappers Association.

Vegetation management is a public concern particularly because of its potential effect on environmental quality. Questions pertained to the amount and types of herbicides used, how chemicals are applied and whether certain types of vegetation can be retained in the corridor to protect and enhance wildlife habitat. Most people attending the meetings were not aware of Hydro's policies with respect to vegetation management, including notice to property owners prior to application, permits and approvals required, the types and amounts of herbicides used, and application methods. The Environmental Studies Consultant provided an overview of the vegetation management program and stated that Hydro is attempting to minimize the use of herbicides where possible. The Consultant noted that there is public support for minimizing the use of herbicides and for allowing low growing vegetation in the corridor.

4) Health Effects

The potential health effects from living and working near the transmission lines was discussed at every public meeting. Many people stated that they became aware of this issue as a result of the B.C. Utilities Commission public hearings on EMF in July, 1989, for the Courtenay-Comox 230 kV transmission line. Questions asked at the public meetings included:

- What are electric and magnetic fields effects, and what is the status of current research?
- Is B.C. Hydro undertaking research into the health effects of transmission lines?
- What information is available and where can it be obtained?
- What is a safe distance to live from a transmission line?
- If EMF is proven to be a hazard, what action will B.C. Hydro take?
- Does placing the line underground reduce the potential EMF, and is this a viable alternative?
- What are the health effects on animals?

The concern about health effects was more prevalent in the Williams Lake and Quesnel areas because of the number of people living and working near the transmission line corridor. At meetings in these two communities members of the public requested more detailed information on electric and magnetic field effects, and suggested that B.C. Hydro provide an expert on EMF for the second set of meetings.

The Consultant noted that information packages on EMF were sent to libraries in Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake and Clinton, and to those individuals expressing a specific interest in the topic prior to the second set of public meetings. This included many people attending the Williams Lake and Quesnel meetings and a number of individuals from the Prince George meeting. Health effects were briefly discussed at the Clinton meeting, but because the line is some distance from the community, it was not a major issue. At the second set of public meetings, Hydro's Project Manager for EMF gave a detailed presentation outlining the findings of current research and future research activities which B.C. Hydro will be monitoring and possibly participating.

In the Consultant's opinion, this information appeared to be well received. Many individuals in the first set of meetings who were concerned about EMF and were sent information packages did not attend the second meetings, suggesting that the information may have satisfied their interest. To verify this, the Consultant contacted one of the more concerned individuals attending the Williams Lake meeting to ensure that the information package had been received along with the schedule for the second set of meetings. This person had received the EMF information, and was aware of the upcoming public meetings. The individual contacted did not attend the second set of meetings in Williams Lake, although others at the meeting stated that the presentation on electric and magnetic field effects was very informative and worthwhile.

In a few cases, however, the information and presentation on EMF was received with skepticism. A Prince George resident and medical doctor felt more information should have been provided on this topic, particularly funding for independent research. This person, in his role as Chairman of the Nechako Environmental Coalition, requested $1000.00 from B.C. Hydro for a literature review. The Consultant noted that rather than provide funding at this stage, B.C. Hydro provided summary research studies and a comprehensive bibliography for Coalition

representatives to review. Dr. Kelly Gibney, Hydro's Project Manager For EMF, also met with representatives of the Nechako Environmental Coalition, and followed up with additional requested information prior to the second set of public meetings. The information on EMF placed in the Prince George Public Library and the College of New Caledonia library was also available for review prior to the second set of meetings.

The Consultant noted that there is a general concern about electric and magnetic field effects, primarily because the available information and studies are inconclusive and, in some cases, contradictory. The public suggested that more could be done to provide research information, and that Hydro should be participating in research on health effects of transmission lines.

The public is also concerned about EMF because of the effect on property values. It is perceived that the controversy will reduce property values and make it difficult to sell land and homes.

5) Induction

People living and working near the transmission lines are concerned about induction shocks that occur as a result of a build up of electricity in buildings, structures and machinery near the lines. This was recognized as an ongoing occurrence independent of the proposed line. The Consultant noted that Hydro Production staff were concerned about the magnitude of the shock people claimed to be receiving and it appeared to indicate that buildings and fences are not properly grounded. B.C. Hydro made a commitment to work with property owners to address induction problems and to provide information and advice on grounding and working in and adjacent to the right-of-way.

6) Right-of-Way Compensation

B.C. Hydro purchased easements for the transmission line right-of-way in the 1960's. A few property owners attending the meetings stated that they were not fairly compensated for their land, and were not aware that there would be four major transmission lines in the corridor (3 - 500 kV and 1 - 230 kV). They went on to state

that the transmission line structures have made it difficult to use the land for agriculture and that property values have been reduced as a result. Specific requests by property owners included:

- additional compensation for the right-of-way;
- support for a property tax appeal to the Assessment Authority;
- reduced hydro rates or free hydro to landowners;
- payment of taxes on the right-of-way lands.

B.C. Hydro's response was that the right-of-way was acquired at fair market value in the 1960's and that Hydro would not be prepared to pay additional compensation. Reduced hydro rates or free electrical power were also not possible, and Hydro would not be prepared to pay property taxes because they do not own the land. It was suggested that the owners contact the local B.C. Assessment Authority office should they wish to appeal their land assessment.

Hydro stated at the meetings that although it was not prepared to pay additional compensation for the right-of-way it would work with the owners to promote agricultural use and to minimize the impacts of new structures.

7) Land Use Management

The transmission line corridor is used extensively for agriculture, particularly in the area from Prince George to Williams Lake. The location of the towers and past clearing practices have resulted in some inconveniences, for example, working around towers and guy wires, problems with debris from past construction, the need for reseeding some areas of the right-of-way to improve forage, and protection from trespassers. Land use problems occur and must be addressed on a landowner specific basis. The Consultant noted that B.C. Hydro has made a commitment to work with affected landowners to enhance agricultural practices and use of the right-of-way. This may require additional clean up during the construction process, ensuring that the right-of-way is left in a condition compatible with adjacent land uses, providing cattleguards were necessary, and marking or protecting tower guys to allow easier farming practices.

8) Management of Woodlots

The additional clearing required for protection of the proposed transmission line will result in a loss of some productive forest land. The public asked about compensation for loss of woodlot productivity, and how the clearing would be handled, particularly in areas where the vegetation provided a buffer to nearby residences.

The Consultant noted that B.C. Hydro is sensitive to protecting the visual vegetation buffer between residences and the transmission line, providing the security of the line is not affected. To reduce this potential impact, B.C. Hydro will work closely with adjacent land owners to select trees that could potentially affect the security of the line and, where possible, protect existing viewscapes.

With respect to the removal of productive forest lands, B.C. Hydro will work with the Ministry of Forests to market merchantable timber. This will be salvaged as part of the clearing process. Where removal of danger trees is required on lands outside of the right-of-way, B.C. Hydro will work with the landowner to identify and remove the vegetation.

9) Economic Effects

The potential for economic benefits as a result of the construction of the proposed line were of particular interest to local and regional governments, and to contractors in the project area. Suggestions to ensure local economic benefits included:

- buying Canadian products needed for construction;
- utilizing local goods and services;
- hiring local contractors to do clearing and construction;
- ensuring trapline compensation;
- using hand clearing instead of herbicides for vegetation management; and,
- ensuring that the right-of-way is left in a condition compatible with adjacent land uses and suitable for agriculture where applicable.

All of these suggestions will help the economy and employment in communities near the corridor, and will improve the agricultural productivity of the land. The Consultant noted that these suggestions have been reviewed and taken into consideration by B.C. Hydro, who has an interest in ensuring that Hydro projects have positive economic benefit.

Effectiveness of the Public Consultation Program

The effectiveness of the public consultation program can be evaluated based on a variety of criteria related to the consultation process, the type and amount of information made available, public access to and participation in public meetings, and the degree to which the public's concerns have been addressed. These are discussed below.

1) Was the public consultation process effective?

a) Meeting Format

The public meetings were designed to be proactive, open and to encourage discussion on particular issues and concerns. This was accomplished through an informal, presentation format using a series of key speakers to present the project to a seated audience. From the Consultant's experience on this project, the meeting format is most effective in creating a group discussion and identifying important issues and concerns. The project team presentations lasted for approximately 40 minutes after which the Consultant acted as an independent facilitator to direct questions to project team members and to bring the group to a concensus on the issues and concerns. The discussion portion of the meeting lasted for up to 3 hours and members of the project team stayed until all concerns and questions were addressed.

This technique proved effective for all of the public meetings, based on the discussion that occurred and the range of issues and concerns identified. Meetings with native groups had a lower profile discussion format, and there has been further involvement of native groups in telephone conversations and written information with the Cariboo Tribal Council and the Alkali Band.

The concept of holding a first set of meetings to present the project and to identify public issues and concerns, and then to report back at a second set of meetings on how these concerns would be addressed by Hydro was effective in showing that B.C. Hydro could work with the public to improve the project. The problem with this approach, however, is that the second set of meetings is often attended by many people who did not attend the first set. To address this, the project team presented the project and reviewed the progress and status of the planning, environmental and public consultation studies at the outset of each meeting.

b) Meeting Locations

The meeting locations were selected based on population and proximity to the transmission line. It was the Consultant's opinion that holding meetings in Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake and Clinton would provide an opportunity for those people interested in broader issues (e.g. electrical energy planning) and those directly affected by the project (e.g. property owners) to attend. To ensure that smaller communities near the transmission line corridor were aware of the project, the Consultant also met directly with Community Associations and Recreation Commissions for Hixon, Cariboo Ferndale, Bear Lake, Ness Lake, Buckhorn and Salmon River in a meeting with the Fraser Fort George Regional Recreation Commission on September 11, 1989. A copy of the Project Prospectus was sent to all members of the Commission on September 06, 1989 (Appendix D-1).

In the Consultant's opinion, the meeting locations were properly selected, and provided a central meeting place for people interested in the project. Additional public meetings in smaller communities would not likely have resulted in new issues being identified, although this opportunity was identified to Community Associations and Recreation Commissions representing these smaller communities at the September 11, 1989 meeting at Bear Lake.

2) *Has there been sufficient time and notice given to each component of the consultation program, to ensure adequate opportunity for full public participation?*

Project information was made available through distribution of a newsletter to all residences adjacent to the corridor, a press release, press kits and media coverage, and through information kits and research material in local libraries, municipal offices and Hydro offices. Public meetings were advertised up to two weeks in advance of the meeting date and individuals on the mail list, including property owners, were notified directly by mail. For the second set of meetings, notices were sent to each person on the mail list, followed by Hydro's second newsletter responding to public concerns. The Consultant has noted that consultation with the public is ongoing, and project team members are continuing to meet and provide information to interested persons.

Despite these efforts, a few individuals did not feel that there was sufficient notice of the meetings, and a few people on the mail list received their information the day before the meeting due to mail delivery services. The project team followed up on these occurrences where possible to address any outstanding concerns.

Based on the total population of the study area, the number of newsletters sent out, and the market area for the newspaper ads, it is estimated that approximately 40,000 households would have been notified directly or indirectly about the project.

3) *Has the public been given the opportunity to express their concerns and ideas about the proposed project?*

A variety of forums were used to obtain public input to the project. These included meetings with local and regional governments and interest groups, distribution of project information, mail contact with property owners, and general public discussion forums. In all meetings, project information was presented and comments and concerns identified for follow up action by the project team. At the public meetings, the Consultant facilitated an issue identification session to identify important concerns to be addressed in the planning process.

The public could also express concerns through Hydro's toll free telephone hotline, by calling B.C. Hydro's Community Relations Coordinator in Prince George, by completing comment sheets and a questionnaire in the information kit, or by writing to B.C. Hydro. Questions and inquiries which could not be addressed directly were handled through B.C. Hydro's External Relations Department. The information requests were directed to staff in B.C. Hydro who prepared the necessary response, which was then sent out through External Relations. All inquiries and responses were catalogued on a computer. In total, as of March 28, 1989, there were 73 public information requests of which 62 responses have been sent out to date by B.C. Hydro; the remaining 11 requests are currently being addressed.

4) *Did B.C. Hydro provide sufficient information to the public on the project and on particular issues of concern?*

a) Information Distribution

Ensuring that people are informed about the project requires both information materials and a means to distribute that information. Early in the process, a variety of information distribution methods were identified including the post office delivery

system, developing a project mail list, placing information in local libraries, government offices and Hydro offices, public meeting presentations and question and answer sessions. Project information included an introductory newsletter, the Project Prospectus, a press release, information kits, discussions with local and regional governments, interest group interviews, presentations at public meetings, and responding to specific information requests. A second Project Newsletter presenting B.C. Hydro's response to the concerns raised in the first set of public meetings was also sent to each person on Hydro's mail list.

In a few cases, problems were encountered in mailing information to individuals due to the nature of the request, the availability of the information or improper addresses. Information is still being sent out to people who have made inquiries as part of the on-going public consultation process.

b) Amount of Information Provided

Information provided to the public was designed to make people aware of the project, and to keep them updated and informed as the planning studies and the public consultation program progressed. Some individuals felt that more information was required, specifically the environmental studies reports prior to the second set of public meetings, and more information on electric and magnetic field effects at the outset of the public consultation program. The Consultant noted that commitments were made to work closely with interested individuals to provide this information.

5) *Were the results of the public consultation program representative of public opinion?*

Over the nine month period that the public consultation program took place, it was the Consultant's intent to create a strong presence and level of awareness about the project. In the Consultant's opinion, the press coverage, advertising, mass distribution of public information and meetings with interest groups and the general public should have created an awareness of the project to anyone directly affected or interested, thereby providing an opportunity to participate in the consultation process.

In the Consultant's opinion, the consultation process provided a representative cross section of views and opinions about the project. Although a higher level of attendance at public meetings would have been welcomed, it is unlikely that new major issues would have been identified and the outcome of the public consultation process would not have been significantly different.

Press coverage on the current project, began on July 12, 1989 when an article appeared in the Prince George Citizen (Appendix B - 9). Generally, the press coverage on the project was positive and helpful in describing the project and the results of the public meetings to the public. However, in the Consultant's opinion, press coverage is not necessarily a true reflection of all of the public's concerns or the investment made in working with the public to address particular issues. Rather, it is one persons perspective and interpretation of a single event within a much larger process.

6) ***Have the issues been addressed by B.C. Hydro, and the project improved as a result?***

B.C. Hydro's response to each of the concerns raised by the public was presented in a newsletter sent to all individuals on the mail list prior to the second set of public meetings. The response to the issues was well received, although there is still concern that further research on EMF is required and that landowners should receive additional land compensation. It is important to note that addressing the issues does not necessarily mean resolving each one according to the public's wishes. Rather it implies the ability to identify concerns and to listen and work with the public in an open and proactive manner to address each issue. In the Consultant's opinion this has been done and has resulted in an effective public consultation process.

Summary

The public consultation program as implemented by PERC took place over a 6 month period beginning in late July, 1989, and lasting through to January, 1990. The program is being continued by B.C.Hydro in their response to information requests and in working with interest groups in the project area. The Consultation Program involved discussions with approximately 14 local and regional governments and community associations, and 30 special interest groups. It included 8 public meetings and 3 meetings with Native groups. Approximately 35 hours of public meetings were held in the communities of Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake and Clinton. These meetings were attended by over 150 people including members of the press. In total, 73 public information requests have been logged and, as of March 28,1989, 11 responses are still being completed. The mail list set up for this project included 370 individuals, all of whom received information on the project and the public consultation program.

In the Consultant's opinion, the public consultation program was sufficiently comprehensive and objective to identify the public's concerns with respect to the proposed Williston to Kelly Lake 500 kV transmission line. There are, however, some outstanding obligations with respect to providing information and keeping the public informed about the status of the project. These have been discussed in the Methodology section of the report under the Monitoring Program.

The overall goal of the public consultation program was to improve the project by incorporating public ideas and concerns into the planning process. We believe that some important examples of how this has occurred on this project include:

- a closer working relationship between B.C. Hydro and property owners along the transmission line corridor;
- improved right-of-way clearing, clean up and maintenance standards;
- installation of cattleguards as an option where public access is a problem;
- potential for reduced visual impact of the line by maintaining the vegetation buffer between the line and adjacent residences;

- identification of ways to improve the economic benefits of the project to local contractors;
- improved public awareness about electric and magnetic field effects, and the assistance made available to property owners by B.C. Hydro to reduce nuisance shocks caused by induction;
- an enhanced awareness of B.C. Hydro's commitment to public consultation and listening to the public's concerns.

The public consultation program has attempted to provide information to the public and to obtain input into the planning process for the transmission line. As a result, it is our opinion that the project has been improved beyond the technical planning criteria, to include a better working relationship between B.C. Hydro and the public. It is important to recognize however, that public consultation and B.C. Hydro cannot solve all of the issues within the scope of one project. To this end, we have noted that B.C. Hydro has made a commitment to continue to address complex issues such as EMF and land compensation.